

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 COME-00
SOE-02 /106 W
-----071898 210915Z /13/63

R 201120Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8101
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 4093

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, PINT, AF, US
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH NEW FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL

1. SUMMARY: THIS DESCRIBES MY INTIAL MEETING WITH
ABDUL WAKIL, THE 33-YEAR OLD NUMBER TWO RANKING OFFICIAL
IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WHO HAS NEVER HELD A JOB BEFORE.
OF NOTE IN OUR CONVERSATION WAS HIS COMMENT THAT THE
FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS OF HIS GOVERNMENT IS TO CONSOL-
IDATE ITS POWER. I USED THE OCCASION TO URGE HIS GOVERN-
MENT TO CONSIDER APPROVING TWO PENDING PRIVATE AMERICAN
PROJECTS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAY 18, I PAID A COURTESY CALL, ACCOMPANIED BY
DCM AMSTUTZ, ON ABDUL WAKIL, THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTRY
SECRETARY GENERAL. WE FIRST LEARNED OF THIS APPOINTMENT
LAST WEEK WHEN WE RECEIVED A CIRCULAR FOREIGN MINISTRY
NOTE INFORMING US TO THE NEW POSITION AND THAT WAKIL
RANKED NUMBER TWO IN THE MINISTRY. THE TWO DEPUTY
FOREIGN MINISTERS THUS RANK BELOW HIM. LIKE MOST
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OTHER EMBASSIES IN KABUL, WE HAD LITTLE INFORMATION
ABOUT WAKIL OTHER THAN HE WAS YOUNG AND HAD BEEN
ACTIVE IN THE KHALQ PARTY.

3. AT THE MINISTRY, THE PRESENCE OF ARMED GUARDS WAS
NOTICEABLY LESS IN CONTRAST TO LAST WEEK. THE SOLDIER
WITH AN AK-37 OUTSIDE THE MINISTERIAL RECEIVING ROOM

HAD BEEN REPLACED BY A BETTER-DRESSED GUARD WITH ONLY A REVOLVER.

4. MR. WAKIL GREETED US CORDIALLY. AS OUR FILES HAD INDICATED, WAKIL IS INDEED A YOUNG MAN. HE SAID HE WAS 33 AND GAVE US THE FOLLOWING BIOGRAPHIC PARTICULARS. HE WAS BORN IN A VILLAGE ABOUT 13 KILOMETERS FROM KABUL. HE ATTENDED HABIBIA HIGH SCHOOL AND GRADUATED FROM THE ECONOMICS FACULTY AT KABUL UNIVERSITY IN 1970. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION, HE CLAIMED TO HAVE A MASTER'S DEGREE IN ECONOMICS. FROM AN EARLY AGE HE SAID HE HAD BEEN ACTIVE IN HIS "PARTY". AFTER GRADUATION, HE HAD DEVOTED FULL TIME TO PARTY AFFAIRS. HE WAS NOW LIVING IN HIS PARENTS' HOME AND SAID HE HAD THREE CHILDREN. HE HAS NEVER BEEN ABROAD, BUT HOPED TO VISIT OUR COUNTRY. WAKIL SPEAKS HALTING ENGLISH, BUT CLAIMED HIS ENGLISH READING ABILITY WAS BETTER. HE HAD AN INTERPRETER PRESENT FROM THE PROTOCOL OFFICE, A MR. ASSIFI, WHOM WE HAD NEVER MET BEFORE.

5. WHEN I ASKED WAKIL ABOUT HIS DUTIES AT THE MINISTRY, HE WAS EVASIVE. HE SAID HE WAS ASSISTANT TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHILE THE TWO DEPUTY MINISTERS WERE RESPECTIVELY RESPONSIBLE FOR POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS.

6. WAKIL OPENED THE SUBSTANTIVE PART OF OUR CONVERSATION.
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TION BY SAYING THAT THE AFGHAN PEOPLE, AS WE OBVIOUSLY KNEW, WERE VERY POOR AND "BACKWARD". IT WAS THUS THE PRIMARY CONCERN OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND OF HIMSELF TO UPLIFT THE PEOPLE. BEFORE HIS PARTY CAME TO POWER, THEY HAD SPENT MUCH TIME STUDYING ALL THE REVOLUTIONS IN HISTORY SO THAT THEY COULD DRAW LESSONS FROM THEIR MISTAKES AND ACHIEVEMENTS. IT WAS IN THIS CONNECTION, AND ON ACCOUNT OF THE BACKWARDNESS OF HIS PEOPLE, THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD WELCOME ECONOMIC AID FROM ALL COUNTRIES, PROVIDED "NO STRINGS WERE ATTACHED." THIS APPEAL FOR AID APPLIED TO THE UNITED STATES AS WELL.

7. WITHIN TEN YEARS' TIME, WAKIL PREDICTED THAT "DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN WOULD BE NOTICEABLE TO ALL". FOR THE PRESENT, THE OVERRIDING CONCERN OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS TO ESTABLISH "SECURITY" IN THE COUNTRY. ONCE THIS WAS DONE, THE GOVERNMENT COULD GIVE FULL ATTENTION TO ITS PROGRAMS AND PLANS.

8. I RESPONDED BY REPEATING WHAT I HAD TOLD OTHER TOP LEADERS HERE THAT WE HAD THREE OBJECTIVES TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN: MAINTENANCE OF AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE, ASSISTANCE

TO AFGHANISTAN'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT;
AND PEACE IN THE REGION. REGARDING ECONOMIC AID, I
SAID WE HAD NEVER GIVEN IT WITH POLITICAL STRINGS
ATTACHED, AND HE AGREED. WE HAD INSISTED, HOWEVER,
ON "TECHNICAL" CONDITIONS TO ENSURE THAT OUR AID WAS
BEING EFFECTIVELY USED.

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R 201120Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 4093

9. THEN, REFERRING TO HIS GOVERNMENT'S NONALIGNED
STATEMENTS, I MENTIONED THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
HAD NOTED THE EXTENSIVE PRESS PLAY GIVEN TO THE SIGNING
OF COMMERCIAL AND AID AGREEMENTS WITH CERTAIN
COUNTRIES (USSR AND CZECHOSLAVAKIA). PRESUMABLY THESE
PROJECTS HAD BEEN READY FOR SIGNATURE AT THE TIME OF
THE REVOLUTION. WAKIL SAID HE SURMISED AS MUCH TOO. I
THEN SAID THAT IN CONTRAST TO THE RAPID ACTION ON THESE
PROJECTS, TWO OF HIS MINISTERS HAD TOLD OUR PEOPLE THAT,
WITH RESPECT TO TWO PRIVATE AMERICAN PROJECTS, ALSO
READY FOR SIGNATURE, THEY KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THEM OR
NEEDED TIME TO REVIEW THEM. I SAID THE TWO PROJECTS
WERE RESPECTIVELY THOSE WITH CITIES SERVICE FOR OIL
EXPLORATION, AND WITH CARE-MEDICO FOR A MEDICAL FACILITY
IN HELMAND PROVINCE. WAKIL LAMELY RESPONDED THAT I
SHOULD UNDERSTAND HIS GOVERNMENT WAS NEW AND IT WOULD
TAKE A LITTLE WHILE FOR THEM TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH
ALL PENDING MATTERS. WAKIL TOOK NOTES AND SAID HE WOULD
LOOK INTO THIS.

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10. AT THE CLOSE OF OUR CONVERSATION, I TOLD HIM THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THE AFGHAN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON WAS BEING RECALLED AND ASKED IF A SUCCESSOR HAD BEEN CHOSEN. WAKIL SAID NO.

11. COMMENT: MR. WAKIL COMES ACROSS AS AN INTELLIGENT, FORCEFUL, AND OBVIOUSLY SELF-ASSURED YOUNG MAN. HE ALSO CONVEYS TO A LISTENER A TOUCH OF ARROGANCE. HIS INEXPERIENCE AND LACK OF MUCH FOREIGN LANGUAGE CAPABILITY ARE SURELY FORMIDABLE HANDICAPS AND MAKE US WONDER HOW EFFECTIVE AND SENSITIVE HE WILL BE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS TOP COLLEAGUES IS ALSO UNCLEAR.
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